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TO

WILLIAM WILBERFORCE.

On the state of the Cotton Factory Labourers, and on the Speech of ANDREW RYDING, who cut HORROCKS with a cleaver.

Kensington, 27 August, 1823.

WILBERFORCE,

I HAVE you before me in a canting pamphlet; and, upon your conduct and character, as developed in that pamphlet, it is my intention to remark fully, at some future time. At present, I shall use it only thus: to ask you what need there was, or what propriety there was, in spending your time in writing and publishing, "An Appeal to the religion, justice and humanity of the Inhabitants of the British Empire, in behalf of the Negro slaves in the West Indies;" to ask you what propriety, what sense, what sincerity, there could be in your putting forth this thing, in the present state of this country? It is

to the inhabitants of the "British Empire" that you appeal, in this heap of shameless cant. "Empire" in your teeth, you retailer of bombast! The French do not call their country an *Empire*. They, possessing real wealth and strength, are content to call their country what it was always called; that is to say, a Kingdom. Take, therefore, this bombast and make what you can of it. But, your Appeal is to the Inhabitants of this Kingdom; that is to say, to the People of England, Scotland, and Ireland.

Now, WILBERFORCE, what do you want these people to do; you appeal to them for *something*. It is hardly to be believed that you do not want them to do something in consequence of your appeal. You call upon them in behalf of the slaves in the West Indies. In short, this is what you appeal to them for, to cause the "transmuting the wretched Africans into the condition of free British labourers." There is a great deal of canting trash; a

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great deal of lying; a great deal of that cool impudent falsehood for which the Quakers are famed; a monstrous quantity of hypocrisy is there evident in these seventy-seven pages of yours; but this would appear to be the substance; this would appear to be what you want; namely, to make the West Indies Negro slaves *as well off as the labourers in this kingdom*. As to "*transmuting the wretched Africans into the condition*," and so forth, that is nonsense too beastly to be used by any one but a son of cant. To put your meaning into plain English, it comes to this, that you want the inhabitants of this country and of Scotland and Ireland, to do something that shall make the West India Blacks *as well off* as the working part of the Whites in these countries.

Now, this being your meaning, there is no man who knows any thing at all of the real situation of the Blacks, who will not declare you to be totally ignorant of the subject on which you are writing; or to be a most consummate hypocrite. Why do you not give us something of a description of the labours, the lodging, the food, the drink, the state of health, and particularly, of the nature and quantity of the food, and the nature and quantity of the labour, in the West

Indies. You do not give us any account of these. You pretend to want the Blacks to be *as free* as British labourers; but you do not tell us what you mean by the word *freedom*. The devil a bit do you make any *comparison* between the lives which the Blacks lead, and the lives which the White labourers lead. When there were a parcel of bothering petitions before the House of Commons last winter, relative to the Black slavery, Mr. JAMES, Member for Carlisle, observed that he was sorry to perceive that, while the Black slaves had so many friends, the poor White slaves, in this kingdom appeared to have no friends at all in the House. I am, in this letter, about to give some little account of these unfortunate White slaves mentioned by Mr. JAMES, and of the laws which affect them. You talk a great deal about the partiality of the laws in the West Indies. What you say about the inhumanity of these laws is right enough; but have you Wilberforce, have you ever done any thing to mitigate the laws which exist in this country with regard to those free British labourers of which you so cantingly talk? Never have you done one single act, in favour of the labourers of this country; but many and many an act have

you done against them. In this canting and rubbishy pamphlet, you bring forward in the way of charge against the West India planters and Assemblies, the following: that "the killing of a "slave was not to be punished, "according to their laws, unless "the killing were committed wan- "tonly, or from *bloodimindedness* "or *cruel intention*. And," say you, "lest there should be any "disposition to visit the crime "too severely, it was specially "enacted, that, 'if any Negro or "other slave, while under punish- "ment by his master, or master's "order, for running away, or any "other crimes or misdemeanors "towards his said master, unfor- "tunately *shall suffer in life or* "member, which seldom happens, "no person whatever shall be liable "to any fine therefore.'" This is perfectly damnable, to be sure: this is tyranny: here is horrible slavery: the tyrants ought to be stricken down by thunderbolts, or to be otherwise destroyed. But, Wilberforce, listen to me a bit; did you never hear of a parcel of people, who were assembled at Manchester on the 16th August, 1819. These were persons whom you call *free British labourers*. Well then, these labourers had not run away from any masters.

They had committed no crimes or misdemeanors towards any masters. About five hundred of them were, nevertheless, killed or wounded: they suffered "*in life or member*." And pray, WILBERFORCE, was any body punished for killing and wounding them? Did any body pay any fines for killing and wounding these free British labourers? Were not those who committed the killing and wounding *thanked* for their good conduct on that occasion? Did you ever object to those thanks? Did you not object to any parliamentary inquiry into the conduct of those who caused that killing and wounding? Well then, this was all right, was it? The killing and wounding at Manchester was right: the thanking of the killers and wounders was right: it was right to applaud the conduct of the Ministers, and to object to inquiry. I find no fault of any body about this, mind. I am not discussing this matter now, though this matter will have to be discussed one of these days. But if these things were all right, it being right that all these things should take place with regard to "*free British labourers*," pray tell us, Wilberforce, why a person should suffer any fine for accidentally killing, for over-pu-

nishing unto death, a runaway negro.

You cannot be ignorant, that a Coroner's Inquest declared that an English soldier died in Yorkshire, last year, in consequence of *having been over-flogged*. This was not a free British labourer, to be sure; but it was a British soldier. Did you ever hear, Wilberforce, of any body having been *fined*, or having suffered in any way, for causing death to come to that man by over-flogging? This was a parallel case to the one selected by you. The soldier had committed a crime. He was flogged, and died in consequence of the flogging. Nobody was fined for it, nor called to account for it. Well, then, why did you not, in fairness to the West India planters, quote this case? Why did you not show that British soldiers might suffer in life or member while under punishment, and that no persons were liable to fine for it? Why did you not make an appeal to the "*religion, justice, and humanity*" of the nation, in behalf of British soldiers, and of your famously free British labourers at Manchester? You have selected certainly the most odious, the most tyrannical, the most terrible, part of the Colonial Code; and yet you see what a

pitiful figure you make with it. Before you set about appealing again in behalf of the Black slaves, pray say a little something about the two cases that I have just mentioned; and endeavour to recollect the state of the people of Ireland, living, or rather existing, under that renowned law, the Insurrection Act.

However, I am rather wandering from my purpose, it being at present my intention to give some account of the state of the "*free British labourers*" of the Cotton-factories in the North; and to introduce, and put upon record, the speech of ANDREW RYDING, who, some time ago, cut HORROCKS with a cleaver. Your appeal is, to the inhabitants of this country. You make your appeal in Piccadilly, London, amongst those who are wallowing in luxuries, proceeding from the labour of the people. You should have gone to the gravel-pits, and made your appeal to the wretched creatures with bits of sacks round their shoulders, and with hay-bands round their legs; You should have gone to the road-side, and made your appeal to the emaciated, half-dead things who are there cracking stones to make roads as level as a die for the tax-eaters to ride on. What an insult it is, and

what an unfeeling, what a cold-blooded hypocrite must he be that can send it forth; what an insult to call upon people under the name of free British labourers; to appeal to them in behalf of Black slaves, when these free British labourers; these poor mocked, degraded wretches would be happy to lick the dishes and bowls, out of which the Black slaves have breakfasted, dined or supped. What! while it is notorious that millions of human beings in these wretched countries never taste of food other than that which is not sufficient to nourish even a poor pig; when it is in evidence before the House of Commons itself, that English labourers, once so well fed, carry even to the field with them cold potatoes instead of meat and bread! Talk, indeed, of "transmuting the wretched Africans into this condition." If the West India planters were to attempt such transmutation, they would speedily have to repent of it. If they were to attempt to give their Black slaves potatoes instead of the Indian meal and pork and rice, which they do give them; if they were to attempt such transmutation, they would soon find, that, to submit quietly to the eating of cold potatoes, men must be under that THING which

is called the "*envy of surrounding nations, and the admiration of the world!*" But, and this brings you to the test, can you produce us any instance of negro slaves *starved to death*? Away with all your trash about "*free British labourers*," and about "*moral sentiment*." You seem to question in one place, whether the Blacks be, "as yet, *fit for the enjoyment of British freedom*." This is nearly in the words of that old canting vagabond, Judge MACKEEN, of Pennsylvania, when speaking of the French nation. *Fit for the enjoyment of what*, Wilberforce? You seem to doubt whether they be as yet fit for the enjoyment of this blessed thing. But, surely, they may be fit to be shut up in their huts from sunset to sunrise. A part of these free British labourers are so shut up; and if they transgress, they are, without Trial by Jury, liable to be transported for seven years. That is pretty well for a British labourer, but, let me bring you back to the point. You never attempt to tell us; you never so much as insinuate that the Blacks perish or even suffer for want of food. But it is notorious that great numbers of your "*free British labourers*" have actually *died from starvation*; and that, too, at

a time when the Minister declared from his seat in Parliament that there was in the country an over-production of food. This is notorious. This can be denied by no one. The devil himself, if he were to come to the assistance of the hypocrites, could not embolden them to deny this fact. This being the case, then; and it being equally notorious that no Black slave ever suffered for want of food, will not the care, will not the anxiety of a really humane Englishman be directed towards the Whites, instead of towards the Blacks, until, at any rate, the situation of the former be made to be as *good* as that of the latter. A very large portion of the agricultural labourers of England. A very large portion of those who raise all the food, who make all the buildings, who prepare all the fuel, who, in short, by their labour, sustain the community. A very large part of these exist in a state of almost incessant hunger. The size of the people is diminishing from this cause. They are becoming a feeble race, they suffer from numerous bodily ailments engendered by the poverty of their food. Their dress is fast becoming nothing but rags; and, in short, every hardship and every suffering that labour and poverty

and starvation can inflict, are becoming their lot. You know this as well as I do; but instead of being, as I am, engaged in constant endeavours to put an end to this degradation and suffering, you are constantly endeavouring to perpetuate them. Never do you utter a syllable against any of the measures by which the suffering of the labouring classes has been produced: never do you propose, second, approve of, or in any way give countenance to, any thing tending to turn the villainous cold potatoes into bread; and you do all the mischief which it is in your power to do, by endeavouring to draw public attention away from the real sufferings of the people at home to the imaginary sufferings of the Blacks. In many respects, your charges against the West India planters and Assemblies are false; and the whole of what you say about them is a tissue of disfigurings and misrepresentings. But, suppose the *whole to be true*. Still it is manifest from your own showing, or, at least, upon the supposition that you have shown all; it is manifest that your "free British labourers" are worse off than your Black slaves. This fact alone is sufficient to characterize you and your endeavours. But

my charge against you is this: that you do the labourers of England great harm, or, at least, all the harm in your power; that you not only do them no good; that you, the great canter and noise-maker about humanity, never seem to admit that they have any thing to complain of; but, on the contrary, that you describe their situation as desirable, by putting it in contrast with that of the Blacks, by the use of the words *free* and *freedom*, as applicable to their situation; and in short, by every trick that the invention of a crafty political hypocrite can furnish.

Thus far by way of preface to the speech of ANDREW RYDING, which speech I think it my duty to put upon record, as most strongly illustrative of the tendency of that system which is "the envy of surrounding nations, and the admiration of the world;" of that system of which you are the eulogist; of that system for the blessed enjoyment of which (so elevated does it cause human beings to be) you seem to doubt whether even your beloved Blacks are as yet fit. I shall have a good deal to say, by-and-by, upon the matters contained in this most eloquent speech of ANDREW RYDING. At present, and before

I insert it, I have only a few words to say with regard to the occasion that brought it forth.

Some time ago, the newspapers informed us that ANDREW RYDING, a cotton-spinner of Preston in Lancashire, had attacked and wounded HORROCKS, who is a big manufacturer at that place, and who is also a Member of Parliament. The vile newspapers called RYDING an *assassin*, just as they called the fellows who, in derision, threw a child's rattle at WELLESLEY. However, RYDING has been tried *for his life*, at the late Assizes at Lancaster. The account of this trial, though very likely imperfect enough, has let us into the history of the cause of this attack upon HORROCKS. In the prisoner's most interesting and most eloquent speech we have this cause most fully stated. There was, it appears, a lawyer by the name of JONES, who cross-examined the witnesses for the prisoner. This Mr. JONES did, it appears, entreat the prisoner to *desist* from general observations; but the prisoner said, "I beg that the counsel will allow me to choose for myself."

It is necessary to premise further, that HORROCKS is partner with one MILLER, and that they are enormously big manufacturers

at Preston, for which place Horrocks is a Member of Parliament. The *turn-out* of which the prisoner speaks, was to prevent a lowering of wages amongst the spinners. The minute description which the prisoner gave of the sufferings of these poor men and their families was, as will be seen, not inserted by the reporter. This must have been a very important part of the speech, and it ought to have been inserted. However, I take the speech as I find it reported in the *Morning Chronicle*, hoping that the public will attend to every part of it. It is a speech of much greater importance than that delivered, the other day, by the Lords' Commissioners, in the House of Lords; and it forms a pretty good commentary on the boastings about "envy of surrounding nations, and admiration of the world."

"The case was here closed for the prosecution, and Mr. Justice Bayley having intimated to the prisoner that the time had arrived for him to offer any thing he had wished to communicate, his Counsel being only allowed to examine witnesses.

"The PRISONER replied with a firm tone, that he had much to offer—much to dwell upon, but the only difficulty, and he trusted his Lordship would remove it, was where he was to begin. Am I, said he, at liberty to begin when I first conceived the subject—when the thought entered my mind, or am I

to begin at that time when the thought was put into execution?

"Mr. Justice BAYLEY.—You must not advise me; it is not your province. You have your own Counsel, and consult with him; by so doing you will be better prepared to enter on your defence.

"PRISONER.—All I demand, or rather wish to be informed of is, am I at liberty to begin where I like in the course of this transaction.

"Mr. Justice BAYLEY.—Most certainly where you like; take the advice of your Counsel, and take your own time.

"PRISONER.—Then, Gentlemen, I shall describe the whole thing from the beginning.

"The PRISONER resumed. These are the facts. The first time the thought occurred to me of attacking Mr. Horrocks, was at the *turn-out* two years past, and from that time how it continued to gain a footing in my mind. Both Mr. Horrocks and Mr. Miller were unknown to me personally, but I made every exertion subsequently, both to know and see who they were; and the result of my information was, that they two were the sole cause of the falling off in the wages of the spinners. Every thing I heard or learnt added to that conviction. I was then spinning for Mr. Kay. We were in the habit of asking his Manager, who reduced the wages ten per cent. The unequivocal answer was, that it proceeded from Mr. Horrocks at a Meeting of the Masters. We were told that Mr. Kay and Mr. Paley both objected to the fall, but still the fall took place. The Manager told us what occurred at that Meeting of the Masters; we found that many of the Masters declared that it would have been better for the men to be dropt (reduced in wages), for they were receiving too much. Our uniform question was, Who is the cause? The Manager answered, sometimes with

a laugh, that Mr. Horrocks was, and that it was agreed that all the Masters should lower as he did. It was asked by us, Whether the Masters allowed Mr. Horrocks to be their head, and act as leader over them? The Manager laughed but said nothing. After turning the subject over in our minds, we all agreed to turn out, and to resist a decision which bore so heavily upon us. The factory of Mr. Horrocks, as well as those of the other Masters, stopped, that is, not that his workmen deserted him, but because they would not work in our room at Mr. Kay's factory, when we went away. We had two meetings at the Green Man, in Preston, where we agreed to strike for the ten per cent. reduced. There are regulations in all factories, by which a workman is bound to give the master a month's notice before he quits the wheel, and nevertheless Mr. Horrocks's people were turning off the men without any notice at all, because the men refused to go to work in another factory, and for thus refusing, there are at this moment some of these men suffering imprisonment for two months in the House of Correction at Preston. The men were determined, and stuck by their resolution, and would not work for some time. We remained out three weeks, and finding on the third week that men were procured from one factory to work in another, some of us went back to our wheels at Mr. Kay's. It was under such circumstances that we judged it proper to return.

"On our return, we understood that Mr. Kay wished to examine us apart, and that he would take no advantage of what any man said. But he examined us in a body as one might say. He first questioned a man called Naylor, and said, 'Now do you deserve any thing, Naylor? What ought you to get for your voyage? You are a drunkard and an idle fellow, and shall have no loom here.' Naylor CRIED, but Mr. Kay added,

'So you went delegating and borrowing money for these people, and abusing me every where; for that you shall not work here.' Such was the treatment of Naylor. Then came Wilson's case. He was also abused and denied work. The third man used so was Hodges, and he was also called idle and drunken, although I solemnly believe (whatever was the fact as to the other two) that Hodges had not drank liquor for five months. It is not my intention to say that he was never addicted, but I know that the Methodists (*I do not belong to them*) got hold of him, and he thence dropt liquor; for he himself told me that he would try how his body would fare by giving it up for a year, and he was in the act of that trying when this charge of drunkenness was made against him. I know that he never, for some months, tasted a second pint of beer; and, as to spirits, I well knew he took none. When I knew that, I went forward to Mr. Kay, and said what was true of the man at that present time. For so doing I was taunted by Mr. Kay, who said—Oh! I suppose Hodges gave you more than your share of the subscription money at the meetings, or an additional glass of ale or grog. I answered, Why speak so, Mr. Kay; do I deserve it from you? I do not believe Hodges would bribe any one; and even if he were capable, why do you suppose that I am a man to be bribed over or won by such means? I said so because his Manager had often told me I was the only honest and not cheating spinner in the factory. I was called by him '*his honest man*.' I answered, Call me not a man, for I am not yet—being under twenty-one years of age. It was thus Mr. Kay wanted to make Hodges out a drunkard, and me a rogue; and acting thus at the very time when all the Masters had bound themselves by a solemn oath (though complaining of the combination of

the men), as I believe---at all events, if not by an oath, they bound themselves by their signatures to forfeit a penalty of three hundred pounds (which I have been told has been in some instances paid by Masters not agreeing.) This worked upon my mind, it perplexed and confused me. I knew not what to do to obtain justice; I prayed to the Almighty sometimes on my knees, before I lay down on my bed. Sometimes in the bed itself, (for, my Lord, it is my habit to pray one way or the other every night,) to guide me how I ought to act in this perplexity. I never injured any man. I had no disposition to murder or harm any person, having no inclination to be unjust; but with the thought I could scarcely sleep an hour, I awoke before five o'clock the next morning. The thing stuck in my mind. It is false to say that I said I would shoot him; my words were, that I might shoot him. I believed that Masters who treated their workmen thus ought to suffer something. These were my thoughts in April 1821, at the time of the turn out. I then worked with Mr. Kay; I was also a Member and one of the Committee of the Preston Union. We met at the Green Man, and at one of these meetings (but remember I was not present), Walton, the constable, suddenly came in upon the people, and seized their Books, without producing any warrant or authority whatsoever; I was on my way to the meeting when he did so, and I met some of the men running away; I cried out, 'You cowards, what are you about, to suffer any man to treat you thus, return, and compel him to give back your books; for what purpose do you thus fly?' They went back, caught Walker by the throat; a scuffle arose, and one man had his coat torn from his back; the constable had thrown the books out of the window, but his throat was let loose upon a positive pledge of getting the books back. They were

sent back on the following day. This occurrence took place in June, 1821. Soon after that Mr. Kay sent for him; I said, 'Thou pretendest to be a friend of the poor, but thou art their bitter enemy; I hoped I was not, and inquired why he sent for me [here the prisoner adverted to a charge made against him for spoiling his work, which he denied], and that was that he was discharged from the factory. [The prisoner then detailed *how he moved about for work at different places, Warrington and Manchester, &c. till the end of the year 1822*]. Having been *attacked with illness*, I returned home from Manchester last spring; I certainly did bid for pistols at an Auction-room, but why I did so, I cannot tell. Had I the money, I would have bought them, although if I really wanted the money I could have got it. The *ill treatment of the men by the masters still prevailed in my mind*, I could not get quit of it; I could not work as I did before; I often spoiled my work. The thought took hold of me, I was thinking of it while I worked, and that was the reason why I could not work as well as I did before, for spinning requires constant close attention. What occasion had I for pistols? I never fired one in my life. I have fired a gun. I wanted to punish or be revenged on both the masters who personally did the injury, but murder, or intention to murder, never entered my mind. I have not told my stronger reason for wishing to punish them. Well, to do it shortly; the three men I told you of were tried at Preston Sessions, and punished with imprisonment for two months in the House of Correction, where one of them is yet; and though very poor, they were condemned to pay the costs of the law prosecution; that was from twenty to one hundred and fifty pounds!!! It was my firm resolve to do nothing like a coward. Whatever I should do, I determined to do in the face of day, and before the eyes of the world. As

the cause of the misery I at length resolved to attack Mr. Horrocks, but how to do it was the subject of my consideration. I at first was inclined to strike him with a stick; then I was disposed to slap him with my fist; but then, thought I, I shall only be brought before the Sessions at Preston, where of justice I shall get no part, because he is a rich master and I am a poor workman. It was this reflection that induced me to attack him with some weapon that should cut him, but not destroy life. By doing so, I knew well that I should be tried for my life; but then, thought I, that trial will take place before the country at Lancaster, where a hearing will be allowed me, to shew to the world the oppression, and the persecution, and the injustice of these masters, and to ascertain whether the Government under which we live will permit to these masters every sort of combination, at the time when if the workmen start at a single meeting, the masters are permitted to treat them at their own will and pleasure. [The prisoner here entered into a description of the particular sufferings attending the imprisonment of the men he mentioned, and of the conduct of a gentleman named Backhouse, who wanted, he said, to inveigle into the prison, to catch him into a stratagem that failed, because the magistrates refused to go to the prison to examine the men, but sent for them at the Bull Inn.] This treatment of his fellow-workmen enraged him very much, and I felt it called and claimed revenge in some way for the calamity so inflicted on my fellow-creatures. There was no justice, I saw plainly, for the poor man, though it had been often told to us, that the law of this country was equal to the poor and to the rich. With that impression firmly rooted in my mind, I took out the cleaver, not intending to kill but to cut; I went to Church with the expectation of meeting Mr. Miller with the Corporation; I did not think to meet Mr. Horrocks,

for I was informed that he was confined to his bed, and so ill, indeed, as to have made his Will. I felt the cleaver, and found that it was not sharp. I approved of its being so, because it would bruise or cut, but not kill. It was my intention to do him bodily harm. Having left the Church because Mr. Miller was not there, on the Church-terrace I saw Mr. Horrocks; I advanced before him, and conceived he was the man, I followed after him, though with no determined purpose. It is very correct that I well know what I have done, but I did not at the time know what I meant to do. I did not mean to hit him on the head, but on the shoulder; on the head, however, he was hit, though it was not my intention. Mr. Horrocks has told you what I did; I do not deny it; but now it is for you to say to the world whether or not you think I am guilty of murder, or that I was influenced in the way laid down in that indictment. I shall trouble you, my Lord and Gentlemen, no farther, but only to thank you for the attentive and kind attention you have given to me."

This speech speaks for itself pretty well; but many of my readers do not fully understand the nature of the Combination-Law here alluded to. That law ought, however, to be understood by every man in the country. Within these five or six months, the nature of the Game-Laws have been made known to the country. Those laws and the New Trespass-Law were but very imperfectly known before the date of Mr. DELLER's Petition, and of LORD CRANBORNE's Bill. Now, how-

ever, the nature of these laws are pretty well known. The Combination-Law is not yet sufficiently known. Let us see, then, what it is; for had it not been for this law, there would, in all probability, never have been any of those things which finally led to RYDING's attack upon HORROCKS.

The Combination-Law was passed in the year 1799; that is to say, in the thirty-ninth year of the reign of the "good old King." Before he had blessed us with another year's reign, that Act was repealed and another passed in its stead. This last Act, which is now in force, was passed on the 29th of July, 1800. The first Act sets out with saying, "That great numbers of journeymen, manufacturers and workmen have, by unlawful meetings and combinations, endeavoured to obtain advance of their wages." The Act keeps on talking of unlawful combinations, and illegal purposes; but then it takes care, in the very first clause, to declare such meetings and combinations to be illegal. After this, it goes on jovially; and enacts the punishments which are to attend the commission of such illegal doings. In other words, it first makes the thing criminal, and then allots the punishment. That punishment is

imprisonment, in the common gaol, or in the House of Correction; and that, too, *without any Trial by Jury*. "Lord ERSKINE and "Trial by Jury: with nine times "nine." Of such stuff as this are the minds of the stupid asses made of, who give their money into the hands of HOBBHOUSE and Company for the support of the cause of liberty in Spain.

Well, WILBERFORCE; the combiners are to go to gaol or to the House of Correction, to the former for not more than three months, and to the latter for not more than two months, for the first going off. *Two Justices of the Peace*, who are appointed and displaced at the pleasure of the Ministers; two of these men are to hear, determine and sentence without any *Trial by the Peers of the party*. It being very difficult to get proof of this combining for the raising of wages, there is a clause in the Act compelling the persons accused to give evidence against themselves or against their associates. If they refuse, these two Justices have the power to commit them to prison, there to remain, without bail or mainprize, until they submit to be examined and give evidence before such justices.

Now, you will observe, Wil-

BERFORCE, that this punishment is inflicted in order to prevent the workmen from uniting together, and by such union, to obtain an addition to their wages, or, as in the case of RYDING and HORROCKS, to prevent their wages from being reduced. Every man's labour is his *property*. It is something which he has to sell or otherwise dispose of. The cotton spinners had their labour to sell; or, at least, they thought so. They were pretty free to sell it, before this Combination-Law of 1800. They had their labour to sell. The purchasers were powerful and rich, and wanted them to sell it at what the spinners deemed too low a price. In order to be a match for the rich purchasers, the sellers of the labour agree to assist one another, and thus to live as well as they can; till they can obtain what they deem a proper price. Now, what was there wrong in this? What was there either un-just or illegal? If men be attacked, either in the market or in their shops; if butchers, bakers, farmers, millers be attacked, with a view of forcing them to sell their commodities at a price lower than they demand; the assailants are deemed rioters, and are hanged; they pleased without being punished? Why, did he ever read, seized, or rather, assisted to seize, this law? Does he know the con-

a man's potatoes in the market at Manchester, and, in compelling him to sell them at a lower price than that which he asked for them: this poor woman, who had, very likely, a starving family at home, *was hanged by the neck till she was dead!* Now, then, if it were a crime worthy of death to attempt to force potatoes from a *farmer*, is it a crime in the cotton-spinner to attempt to prevent others from getting his labour from him at a price lower than he asks for it. It is impossible; statutes upon statutes may be passed, but it is impossible to make a man believe that he has fair play, if farmer's property be to be protected in this manner, and if it be a crime, to be punished by imprisonment, without Trial by Jury, to endeavour to protect the labourer's property.

This Combination Act does, however, say, that the "masters" "shall not combine against the workmen." Oh! well then, how fair this Act is! And what did RYDING mean, when he talked about the *partiality* of the law? What did he mean by saying that there was no law for the poor man; that there was no justice; that the masters could do what they pleased without being punished? Why, did he ever read this law? Does he know the con-

tents of the fortieth year of the *good old King, chapter 106?* Does not this law say that all contracts between masters and other persons for reducing the wages of men; does not it say, in short, that all such combinations of masters against workmen, "shall be, and the same are hereby declared to be, *illegal*, null and void, to all intents and purposes whatsoever?" Does not the law say this; and does not it empower the two Justices to *send the masters to the common gaol and the House of Correction?* No, the devil a bit does it do such a thing! No such a thing does it do. However flagrant the combination; however oppressive; however cruel; though it may bring starvation upon thousands of persons; though it may tend (as in numerous cases it has tended) to produce breaches of the peace, insurrections and all their consequences; though such may be the nature and tendency of these combinations of the masters, the utmost punishment that the two Justices can inflict, is a *fine of twenty pounds!* But, and now mark the difference. Mark it, **WILBERFORCE**; note it down as a proof of the happiness of your "*free British labourers*;" mark, that the masters cannot be called upon by the Justices to **GIVE EVI-**

DENCE AGAINST THEM-SELVES AND THEIR ASSOCIATES. Mark this, you who have so much compassion for the Blacks. This is the happy state to enjoy which you seem to be almost afraid that the Blacks are, as yet, not quite fit! The "*transmuting* of the wretched Africans into the condition" of these cotton-spinners; these *free* British cotton-spinners, the elevating of them, as you call it, might, indeed, be apt to turn their poor shallow brains. You are for giving them, "*free scope* for their "industry and for their *rising* in "life." You are for giving them an interest in defending the community. To be sure, these cotton-spinners have, living under this Combination-Law, a very free scope for their industry; a great deal of chance of rising in life; and a monstrous deal of interest in defending the community! The cotton-spinners are not, however, so beastly; such complete brutes as not to be able to discover something of the nature of their real situation.

I shall not stop, upon this occasion, to ask whether you, Wilberforce, know any thing about the passing of this Combination-Law. I shall not ask, how such a law came to be passed; for there is

no man in his senses that does not clearly see the reason for passing it. But, I shall proceed now to give, in addition to what we have in the speech of ANDREW RYDING, some account of these *free* British labourers to the enjoyment of similar blessings with whom you are anxious to elevate the Blacks. There has been, for many years past, an almost continual struggle between the cotton-labourers and their employers. Recently there has been, if there be not at present, a struggle of this sort going on at Bolton in Lancashire. The workmen, in answer to one of their assailants who calls himself *Boltoniensis*, have published a statement, from which I make the following extract. In all human probability, no redress will be obtained by these people. They, however, have published this statement of their case. It is dated on the 15th *February* 1823, and published at Manchester, by J. PHENIX, No. 12, *Bow-street*. Read it, WILBERFORCE, and then go back to the WEST INDIES, collect a parcel of Black people together, and offer them a comfortable situation amongst these "*free* British labourers." The things related are so monstrous, so horribly degrading; so beyond all measure cruel

and insulting to the poor people, that I could fain believe them not to be true. However, here is the account, and the reader will, when he has gone through the humiliating detail, be, with me, convinced, that shocking as it is, it is true.

Boltoniensis says, "The reports respecting fines, a shop, &c. are false; and that the whole of the fines in the year 1822, including what was charged for broken and lost skewers, amounted only to 8s. 0½d. each spinner, or something less than 2d. per week. It is easy to tell this to the public, who cannot disprove it: but the public will at once see, that if an individual is fined, the fine falls on that individual, and is not borne by the rest of his shopmates: therefore, average in such cases, may be easy to *Boltoniensis*,—not to the sufferer.

"A list of fines at Tyldesley;	
and the heat from 80 to 84 degrees;	
Any spinner found with his window	
open	1s.
Any spinner found dirty at his work	1s.
Any spinner found washing himself	1s.
Any spinner leaving his oil-can	
out of its place	6d.
Any spinner repairing his drum-	
banding, with his gas lighted	2s.
Any piecer spilling water on the	
staircase, from a degging-can	1s.
Any spinner slipping with his	
gas lighted.....	2s.
Any spinner putting his gas out	
too soon	1s.
Any spinner spinning with gas	
light too long in the morning	2s.
Any having his lights too large,	
for each light.....	1s.
Any spinner heard whistling....	1s.
Any spinner having hard ends	
hanging on his weights.....	6d.
Any spinner having hard ends	
on carriage band.....	1s.

Any spinner being five minutes after last bell rings	2s.
Any spinner having roller laps, no more than two draws for each roller lap	6d.
Any spinner going further than the roving room door, when fetching rovings.....	1s.
Any spinner being sick, and cannot find another spinner to give satisfaction, must pay for steam, per day	6s.
Any spinner found in another's wheel-gate.....	1s.
Any spinner neglecting to send his sweepings three mornings in the week.....	1s.
<i>Any two spinners found together in the necessary, each man</i>	1s.
Any spinner having a little waste on his spindles.....	1s.

“ [All these fines are as easy to be made as the underling can scratch his pen; and it is entirely at his humour or caprice]

“ At Tyldesley, they work 14 hours per day, including the nominal hour for dinner;—the door is locked in working hours, except half an hour at tea time;—the work-people are not allowed to send for water to drink, in the hot factory;—and even the rain water is locked up, by the master's order, otherwise they would be happy to drink even that.

“ The public has seen the fines, of which the spinners at Tyldesley are perpetually in jeopardy, and by which (some of them inconsistent, others contradictory) the poor people's earnings are extracted before they receive it. One poor sick man was stopped 4s. because he could not work. *Boltoniensis* may laugh at these matters, and call them trifles; because he tells the public, when averaged, they are but a trifle. The public do not inspect the books; if they did, they would find that the earnings are exaggerated, and the fines depressed by him, as the following

few cases, out of many others, will shew distinctly :

“ A person, who shall be nameless, about the end of 1821, or beginning of 22, span a set of 150 hanks, weighing 19lbs. for which he received nothing:—another person, about same time, span a set of 99 hanks twist, which was wofted, with loss to the said person of 2s. and upwards:—another, about same time, was served in the same manner, and suffered the same loss:—another suffered in the same manner, with 80's twist, but his loss was only 2s. or rather better. I must go on, but the next person, who span 60 hanks twist, was fined 20s. but rather than pay it, he left, and so obtained it:—the next span 110 hanks twist, and was abated for roller laps 10s. :—my next example is curious; a person was fined for roller laps, by Mr. —, 7s., and the officer, who was in another room, consequently did not see the said roller laps, was fined 5s. :—last, but not the least sum, a poor carder was fined 10s. Next comes the poor engineer, who was fined 20s.; but the poor man, who knew he had done his duty, resolved rather to quit the employ. Accordingly he packed up his trifles, and was about to decamp; but his trifles were stopped, and he subjected, at last, to the fine.

“ *Boltoniensis*, the advocate for abuses, mentions a shop, respecting which false reports had been circulated; but he does no more than say, the whole of the hands have been uniformly paid in cash every fortnight, without the least restraint.—This is perhaps true; except as to the fines, &c.—But this does not say *there was no shop*.

“ That Mr. S. keeps a shop, is undeniable: that he is tenant to the employer is as true; and pays 50l. per year rent for a shop five yards square, and a kitchen and housepart six yards square. The other parts of the house are a warping room, a par-

lour furnished, and a bed room with two beds. The warping room, parlour, and bed room, are the landlord's, or the master's, who also lets the cellar for 2s. 5d. per week; and, that no avenue of gain may be missed, the very passage is appropriated to a butcher of Westhoughton, who *allows the master 15 per cent. of his gain*, by selling flesh to the work-people.—As to the shop, the articles sold are as dear as at any small retail shop in the neighbourhood, and dearer than they can be had at many places: particularly wearing apparel. As to the propriety of this shop, it is not so easy to say; but facts will speak for themselves.—The master of the factory does *not force his workmen to buy at the shop*; but if any buy at another shop *he is challenged, and threatened to be turned off*. If any workman's wife purchase but a trifling matter at another shop, (which they would not do if this afforded equally cheap and good) Mr. S. tells the bookkeeper, and the latter says to the workmen, that the master *will not allow such work*, and they must tell their wives neither to go to another shop, nor give saucy language to the shopkeeper, for the master will not allow it.

"That persons are sent from Bolton regularly, at stated times, to inspect, overhaul, and take stock, at this shop, is certain; which common sense would call a propriety, but at any event, a large interest flows from it, beside extortionate rent. The public will judge for themselves, but much more might be added.

"Amongst the many reports circulated, false or true, *Boltoniensis* has not taken notice of one, which is pretty common, and no less true; namely, the extravagant charge made for house-rent, at the healthy, plentiful, and cheap district already quoted; and the public will see, that whatever is cheap there, rents are not. Cottages of exceeding small dimensions are let to the

workmen at the factory, at 9l. 2s. per year; but they have the rent stopped, or rather, they *pay it each fortnight*. A cellar is 2s. 6d., and if a house or cellar be empty, and a workman comes to work, if he have another house or cellar, he must *pay rent for the empty one*, whether he occupy it or not; and they have also to bear every species of imposition *without grumbling*; or if any thing like that be heard, they are discharged. It may seem strange, yet it is true, that one spinner had to pay rent for one of these habitations a whole year before he saw the key, or had possession; he had it afterwards, but set it to another for six months longer. Sometimes a spinner may be ill, as all men are by times; if a person come from Bolton, or elsewhere, to occupy those sick wheels, as they are termed, though the sick person has an habitation, yet the person who spins for him must pay for one, if there is any empty. People bear with these impositions for the sake of employ; who then can suppose them idle, or that they seek or crave exorbitant wages? Their earnings go from whence they came, and enrich those who employ them. From the account already given, it will be seen that they have no time to make away their earnings in extravagance. Why then should they not live? Why should masters muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn?

"All that was wanted by the Tyldesley spinners was to be paid as other spinners were for the same kind of work; their peculiar heavy charges, on many accounts, as has been already shewn, required it; and, as to the concluding observation of *Boltoniensis*, respecting whether, if there were any room for an advance of wages, it should be given to the spinner or the weaver? To this it may be proper to observe, and every weaver of sense will observe it, that the insinuation is merely to cajole the weavers,

and no more. They are aware that no good ever came from that quarter, therefore the idea of robbing Peter to pay Paul, is insignificant, like its author: as advance of wages is not the argument, but an uniformity with other masters.

"To close the whole subject, which is merely done to give the impartial public an accurate view of the case and its bearings, it is hoped that the peculiar hardships which spinners have to undergo in their employ, cooped up in factories heated by steam for 14 hours in each day (save the nominal dinner hour), during which they are subject to such rules as have before been related, and at night in winter they have to inhale with every respiration the *effluvia of the noxious gas mixed with steam*; and the whole day, *the dust and cotton flyings*, which, with incessant labour, renders them old men when others are hale and strong; then, unless they have been peculiarly careful, they can turn to no business, but pine in a work-house.

"The spinners wish well to their masters,—they grudge them not their gains; but if the golden rule of "Do to others as you would wish them to do unto you," had been observed, then these would not have appeared."

That, then, WILBERFORCE, is the state of your "*free* British labourers." Look at the fines! See the crafty invention for multiplying the poor creatures of their earnings. Think of the horrid state of things when a fine for the *two men being together*, can be thought of as a thing necessary to be imposed! Think of a fine, amounting to a large part of a week's wages, for a man's open-

ing a window to get a breath of cool air, after having been shut up for many hours in a heat of from eighty to eighty-four degrees! Look at the regulation to prevent the thirsting creatures from drinking even the rain-water! Look at the SHOP: in short, look at all the artifices, all this ingenious mixture of force, menace and fraud: look at the wretched creatures: look at their miseries: look at their perishing and emaciated frames: then look at your fat and laughing, and singing and dancing negroes and negresses; and then believe, if you can; flatter yourself, if you are able, that we shall think you a man of humanity, making, as you do such a bawling about the imaginary sufferings of the latter, and saying not a word about the sufferings of the former, who are your own country-people, who are living under your very nose, and with whose miseries and degradation you must be acquainted.

Adverting, now, to the trial at Lancaster, it is curious to observe, the verdict, upon this occasion: it was this, "*Guilty; but of unsound mind.*" And I have read, that RYDING has since been sent to the Lunatic Asylum of the county! It is very curious, too,

that, from the beginning of the trial, there appeared to be no pressing for the capital punishment. The execrable newspaper, called the *Preston Chronicle*, had, it seems, published some most infamous statements relative to what was ludicrously called the *assassination*. The prisoner observed, that when he was at the house of MILLER (partner of HORROCKS), MILLER's wife refused him a glass of water; but that the husband said, "Let him have it, poor man, he has only a short time to live." Somehow or other, there appeared not, however, any disposition to bring him to the gallows. His mother and father were called by his counsel, to prove him insane. He reproved his mother most severely for what he called her false swearing. Her evidence, however, was received with the greatest indulgence, and even with respect. Those who have read the speech with attention will need little assistance to enable them to form a correct judgment with regard to the state of his mind. The strangest madman in this world he must have been: for, he intended to do every thing which he did, and he produced all the effects which he intended to produce. "I knew," says

he, "that if I cut him I should be tried for my life: I knew that that trial would take place here, and would be heard of in all parts of the country. I knew that, in this way, I could bring the case of the injured workmen fully before the country; and that we should then see whether the Government would support the masters in their doings against the men!" Did ever a madman speak thus before? Perhaps it is a peculiarity belonging to the "Lower Orders," that they become possessed of great talents when they are mad. Be this as it may, I know of a great many very pretty gentlemen, who are not *generally* thought to be insane, and the whole of whose skulls do not, in my opinion, contain as much sense as there manifestly is in the "*unsound mind*" of this single cotton-spinner.

The trial was, on the part of the prosecution, carried on in the most quiet manner possible. In the report, there is no speech given to Lawyer SCARLETT, who opened the business. Who selected the counsel for the prisoner I cannot tell; but he appears to have been extremely anxious that the prisoner should go into no matter of a general nature. Into that matter, however, he went; and his

speech is, perhaps, the best commentary that could possibly be made upon the Combination-Law; upon that Law, which, for combining to raise their wages or to keep up their wages, punishes the workmen with imprisonment in the common gaol or the House of Correction, and which, for combining to lower the men's wages, or to keep them down, punishes the rich masters with a fine of twenty pounds: that law; that never-to-be-forgotten law, which compels the workmen, under pain of unlimited imprisonment, to give evidence against themselves or their associates; and which calls upon the combining masters to give no evidence against themselves or against their associates! Why was the clause passed to compel the workmen to give evidence against themselves and their associates? Because, without such power of compulsion on the part of the Justices, it would be next to impossible to get at evidence. How, then, if such were the difficulty to get at evidence in the case of the workmen, numerous as they necessarily must be, and exposed to temptation by their poverty: if this compulsory clause were necessary in their case, how much more necessary in the case of the masters, com-

paratively few as they must be, in point of numbers, and wholly unexposed to temptation to divulge the secrets of the combination? The consequences have been such as might have been expected.— Who ever heard of a *master* being punished under the Combination-Laws? And yet you, WILBERFORCE, with all these facts before you, have the shamelessness to put forth an appeal to the inhabitants of this country, calling upon them to do something towards “transmuting the wretched African into the condition of *free* British labourers.” Go to ANDREW RYDING; make your appeal to, and get your answer from, him.

It is surprising to observe the quietness with which this affair of RYDING and HORROCKS has gone off. When it was first heard of, the base London press gave tongue, and was almost in full cry. Murderer, assassin, and all sorts of hard names were poured forth, with very little remorse. The traders of the press had the offender hanged, so clearly that you could almost see him hanging before you. It is curious to perceive how quietly they let the curtain drop now. All the trash that they have received or pretend to have received from Spain and Portugal for the last year, have

been of far less importance than the speech of this cotton-spinner ; and yet they are as quiet as mice about it. If he had been hanged, they would have been noisy enough : they would have vied with each other in cant about a sacrifice to the "*outraged laws of the country.*" We should have had several days of it, and have been almost ready to sacrifice ourselves rather than not get out of their hearing. But this not hanging the man ; and especially after such a speech, seems to have wholly disconcerted the traders.

When the Parliament shall meet again, there will, I trust, be Petitions for the repeal of this Combination Law. Any of us can Petition. The "*admiration*" has not yet made that criminal, and while you, WILBERFORCE, are petitioning for the Blacks, I am resolved to see if I cannot find somebody to join me in a Petition for the Whites. You seem to have a great affection for the fat and lazy and laughing and singing and dancing negroes ; they it is for whom you feel compassion : I feel for the care-worn, the ragged, the hard-pinched, the ill-treated, and beaten down and trampled upon labouring classes of England, Scotland, and Ireland, to

whom, as I said before, you do all the mischief that it is in your power to do ; because you describe their situation as being good, and because you do, in some degree, at any rate, draw the public attention from their sufferings.

It is not my intention to enter into a full examination of your hypocritical pamphlet ; but I cannot conclude this letter without observing on the malignity which you discover towards the West India planters. You talk of the good example "*afforded in many of the United States of America.*" You must know that this conveys a falsehood as gross as ever was put upon paper. It is more than thirty years since the negro slavery was mitigated in the Middle and Northern States of America ; but you must know that, in more than *three fourths* of the territory of the United States, negro slavery exists without limit. You must know that the number of negro slaves in the United States has increased with the number of the inhabitants of that country ; you must know that not a single pound of tobacco, rice or cotton, the three great exportable articles of the country, proceeds from any but the sweat of slaves. You must know, that

even the free negroes are taken in the Northern States, and carried and sold in the Southern States, you must know that the seat of the Congress itself is a grand mart of Negro Slavery; you must know that, in spite of laws to the contrary, ships in great numbers are fitted out from the United States to fetch negroes from the coast of Africa. Knowing all these things, how very sincere a man you must be to represent the United States as holding forth a laudable example. Throughout your whole pamphlet, you do not even allude to the French. The King of Holland (mighty Sovereign!) most readily consented to abolish the Slave Trade! The Governments of Spain and Portugal did talk of it, I believe. The United States of America were your rivals in *expressions* of humanity; but, when it came to the pinch, they would by no means consent to the right of searching vessels containing slaves, though the right was to be *mutual!* But, as to the French, they condescend to give no answer to your cant. Their colonies want the slaves, and they carry on the traffic in contempt of your remonstrances and your prayers. What is the use of all your efforts, as long as this is the case? You have this

great nation to contend with; and she is neither to be bullied nor wheedled. Your *humane friend*, CASTLEREAGH, obtained a stipulation for the Abolition. What a scandalous, what a hypocritical proceeding! The Debt, however, soon pulled the thing down, made it repent of having held itself forth as a conqueror; and, at any rate, if it had not the grace to repent, compelled it to desist, made it hold its saucy tongue and submit in silence.

Great efforts are made to disguise the chagrin and mortification which the THING is now experiencing from the conduct of France. I know of few persons who have had more to do than you have in the causing of this mortification. It is now manifest to the whole world that France must become our master, unless we shake off the burdens which we have brought upon ourselves in order to possess the means of effecting what was hoped would be her ruin. We are now struggling against this Debt, and while we are thus engaged, she will deal us blow after blow. For my part, I have long foreseen and foretold, that such would be the consequences of the wars against France. Others now say the same thing, and the *Old Times Newspaper* of

the 25th instant, has the following, whereby to show the advantageous result of that long and bloody War of which it was one of the most strenuous advocates. "One of the French Ministers, when lately speaking of the affairs of Spain, was met with the objection—but *what will England say to your military occupation of the ports and fortresses of Spain?*—The answer was, What will GENEVA say? Why, England has now no more power on the Continent than a Swiss Canton. Her Debt, her divided Ministry, and her Irish Catholics are quite enough for her."

This is false. This lying Old Newspaper could not possibly know that any French Minister said such a thing: nor would any French Minister say it under circumstances which would cause it to reach this lying Old Newspaper: but there can be little doubt that such is the language of the French Ministers, as far, at least, as relates to the Debt. The Editors of this Old Newspaper hear hundreds of people expressing the same sentiments. This vile Newspaper never has a thought of its own: it waits to feel the pulse of the public before it speaks. It knows the value of expressing opinions which are al-

ready entertained: it knows, in short, that the country is beginning to reproach the Government with the loss of power and the degradation of the country; and it only makes itself the mouthpiece of those reproaches. These reproaches, however, are wholly unavailing. The time is past for repenting of the contracting of the Debt. Contracted it is; and it is destined to avenge the people of France for all the injuries, and all the indignities which that Debt was the means of pouring forth upon them.

Your share of the glory of *conquering France* was the extorted stipulation with respect to the *Slave Trade*. That stipulation was hardly entered into before it was openly disregarded. Many were the pretences for not *demanding* the fulfilment of the stipulations; many the excuses for not doing that which we soon found we had not the power to do. How bold, how resolute our tone to the Kings of Holland and Portugal; but how mild our humanity, when it addressed itself to the King of France. **MARSHAL NEY**, *Wilberforce*: there "*humane*" **WILBERFORCE**, think of the death of **MARSHAL NEY**; and then wonder, if you can, that the mortification of the **THING**; that its **cruel**

mortification; that its approaching degradation gives pleasure to the people of France and to every just man in England. Away with your cant about the happiness and the morality of the Blacks. You will next take us to the baboons and the monkies; and indeed, anywhere to make us lose sight of those who are suffering under our eyes, and screaming aloud to us for help. You can see the miserable Irish stretched out by thousands, expiring from hunger; and you can coolly invite us, in the name of humanity, and of Christian charity, to come forward and bestir ourselves in "transmuting the wretched Africans into the condition" of those *free* and stretched-out and starving creatures!

In another letter, when I have more leisure, I will give your pamphlet a thorough ransacking. Indefatigable as you are, your cant shall make no progress, while I hold a pen to expose it. Answer me, with regard to the over-flogged soldier: answer me with regard to the people killed and wounded at Manchester. To make comparisons of this sort, you have the cool impudence to call sophistry. Those who have long been your dupes, may be incorrigible; but your power to cajole is departed.

Your craft has worn itself out: your name now excites, at the best, a smile or a shake of the head. Seldom has there been a man, who, with the advantages which you once possessed; with all that wonderful combination of cant-cherishing circumstances that once enveloped you; seldom has there been a man to spin himself out so completely as you have done. I think it very probable that you will live to see the repeal of every act in the passing of which you have ever been instrumental. And, as such repeal would include that Combination-Act of which I have above spoken, and which certainly produced the subject of the speech of ANDREW RYDING; I have no hesitation to say that this sweeping repeal, which would doubtless give you so much mortification, would give pleasure the most sincere to

W.M. COBBETT.

The following letter from Mr. HOLLIS, I think it right to insert, because he seems to be hard pushed by a set of men who formerly were ready to do any thing that he would wish to have done. Every thing that I see, clearly shews that he intended to commit no fraud; and, as I said before

if Old **GEORGE** Rose had been alive, and if the **THING** had been in its vigour (mind that!), very little indeed would have been said about this affair of Mr. **HOLLIS**.

*To the Editor of the Hampshire County
Newspaper.*

SIR,—Having been absent from home the greatest part of the time since the insertion of my Card, in your Paper of the 28th ult. and finding that the statement that I deem necessary to remove and refute the aspersions cast on my character at the last Session, I cannot complete, without being furnished with a copy of the Report of the Committee for Investigating my Accounts, as Treasurer, which I intend to apply for at the next adjourned Sessions; and, as much of what I shall have to say will be more properly addressed to the Magistrates only, and not to the public at large, I think it necessary merely to state to the public that the not publishing that Report, and rescinding the order that had been made for so doing, and my giving in my resignation, was at the suggestion of Mr. William Grant, one of the Magistrates, and a most respectable professional friend who was with him, and upon Mr. Grant's assurance that, from what he knew of the sentiments of *other* Magistrates, he had no doubt that I should be re-elected at the next Session. Desirous of complying with the suggestions of these two friends, I acquiesced in them, with scarce two minutes time for reflection, as the proposition was made to me in the street, as they met me going up to the Hall; but I soon saw that I had given my enemies an advantage, and injured myself, by so doing, and determined on applying for the Report being published and circulated amongst the

Magistrates, that I might fully answer it.

I shall now, therefore, content myself with a re-insertion of that part of the *first* Report of the Committee which I inserted in my letter to you, in your Paper of the 2d of June last, and which is as follows:

The Committee state in that Report, that "the explanation given by Mr. Hollis to Mr. Wright and Sir James Gardiner, was in itself perfectly satisfactory, and clearly proved that Mr. Hollis had not intentionally made any error in his accounts."

And in the conclusion to that Report, is added—"Your Committee, in conclusion, desire to record the uniform disposition evinced by Mr. Hollis, throughout the whole of this investigation, to furnish them with every document and evidence in his possession, which your Committee have deemed essential to the elucidation of the complicated accounts before them; and they feel also, it is particularly due to Mr. Roberts, one of Mr. Hollis's clerks, to acknowledge, that they have received from him the most able and ready assistance."

This letter of mine, was *replied* to, but *not* answered by a letter, dated the 4th of June last, and signed J. W. S. Gardiner, Chairman, W. H. Newbolt, and R. Wright, *two* of them being the very persons with whom I held the first communication on this subject, and who had *perfectly* *acquitted* *me* of *any* *knowledge* of the errors that had arisen, as above stated in the Extract from that Report.

The *temper* in which that letter was written, and the *terms* in which it is expressed, in several parts of it, were a sure presage of the *future* treatment that I might expect from those three Gentlemen, who have been almost the only persons that have attended the subsequent meetings of the Committee, the final Report of which was drawn

by Sir Jas. Gardiner, the Chairman, assisted, I have no doubt, by Mr. J. Woodham, the Candidate, who first sought to obtain my office of Treasurer, though I had told him I had no intention of resigning.

The *terms* I allude to are these—they say that mine were mere “garbled extracts,” and ask, “Is “it not obvious, by his having “done so, that his sole object was “to remove all imputation of “blame from himself, and to *fix it* “upon others?”

Now I request that my letter to which this reply was made, may be referred to, and it will be seen whether I had any such object in view, and whether the reference I made therein, and in my observations made to the Magistrates at the commencement of the inquiry, from which the greater part of that letter was taken, was not merely to show that the irregularities at Mr. Woodham's Office, was one of the causes of such errors having arisen, but in which I in no way personally implicated him, nor meant to do so, as I did not then know, what has since been *proved in evidence*, that a Rate for the Lower Half-Hundred of Buddlesgate, granted in the year 1820, amounting to 85*l.* 8*s.* had been paid to him by Mr. Nathaniel Harris, the constable, in that year, and is still in his hands, and that his nephew, Mr. John Woodham, had received the Rate for the Hundred of Redbridge, granted at Easter Sessions, 1819, so long ago as May 1819, and which was not paid till the 30th June last, through the hands of Messrs. Pepper, of Southampton, on behalf of Mr. John Brookman, the constable, but from money supplied by Mr. John Woodham, and who also paid the expenses of several journeys to Winchester taken by the constable to answer summonses issued against him for non-payment of this Rate, and of Mr. John Tiller, who paid the money for him; and it is remarkable, that

neither of these cases (which would have gone partly to excuse me, and to show that *all* the causes of error did not arise in my Office,) are observed upon in the final Report made to the last Session, although a letter from Mr. George King, of Eling, (for whom Mr. Brookman was deputy,) detailing the facts, was received by me on the 11th ult. desiring me to communicate it to the Magistrates, and which I sent to, and was received by Sir James Gardiner, as Chairman of the Committee, on the same day.

The reference that I made to Mr. Woodham, as to the irregularities of his Office, has been my great and only offence given to these three Magistrates, and to Sir James Gardiner in particular, and is declared to be my “object to remove “all imputation of blame from my “self, and to *fix it upon others*.” Now, I would emphatically ask, “Is “there not blame imputable to “others, and has not their conduct “been one cause of the errors?” For how could I charge myself with, or account for, any monies that had not been paid to me, nor, as I knew, to any one else; and I would also ask, Why did Mr. Woodham suffer his clerks, or his nephew, to receive Rates, and especially receive them himself, without their being immediately paid over to me, that I might have accounted for them?

Why Sir James Gardiner has thus sacrificed me to exonerate Woodham from all blame, and why, pending the inquiry, he so often partook of Mr. Woodham's hospitalities, he best knows, but I know a little too.

I have rendered him services of various kinds, for many years past, and I know of no breach in our friendship until it became so apparent in the letter of the 4th June, signed by him and Dr. Newbolt and Mr. Wright.

To them, therefore, I thus address myself, through you—“I DARE

THEM TO THE PROOF" of any one fact that can justify them in retracting one word of what I have stated from the *first* Report, which was drawn by Sir James Gardiner, and signed by all of them, though attempts were made in the *final* Report to take from me their previous acquittal of all *known* error, and by plausible inferences (but which can be, and shall be, most satisfactorily answered and removed) to fix a stigma on my name, which they know, and have repeatedly declared, does not attach to it. When I first saw Sir James Gardiner and Mr. Wright on the subject, and when, in the presence of my clerk, Mr. Roberts, they acquitted me of all previous knowledge of the existing errors, and which I was the first person to discover and to solicit an inquiry into, I expressed myself thus:—"I do not care to what sum the errors may amount, I will pay them; leave me but my good name, and I shall be content."

I cannot conclude this address (which has imperceptibly, but unavoidably, extended to such a length,) better than by repeating what I have so frequently said before—"If any one ever knew me guilty of a dishonourable, or even an ungenerous act, I desire they will come forward and state it."

The character of every man is, in my opinion, more dear to him than money or place; but to me, holding the public offices I have done and still do, and who have so large a family that must be benefited or suffer by the character that I may deserve and leave behind me, it is every thing that can give consolation and support, and shall be defended at all hazards; and I am sure that all those who wish me well will see that I am justified in my endeavours to preserve it.

I am Sir, &c.

GEORGE HOLLIS.

Winchester, Aug. 15, 1823.

A DR. COLLYER, of Peckham Meeting-House, has published a sort of Appeal to the Public. The Doctor does not, in my opinion, *clear the matter up!* His taste has been a very singular taste. He does not make a full statement. He talks of charges against him, but he does not let us know *what they are.* I shall be very glad to see, before next week, something a little more satisfactory from the Doctor. If I do not, I shall then insert his Appeal, and offer my opinion upon it. We have the defence, at present, without having the accusation. The telling of me, that "the Committee have *acquitted* him," is telling me very little. I remember a Methodist Parson at Botley, who, on a charge of having made rather too free with a being exactly the opposite of a boy, was acquitted by "a Committee of the Church," the Methodist Bishop being at the head of the Committee. This worthy minister, notwithstanding his being acquitted, did certainly (his wife being from home) go into the girl's bedroom, in the middle of the night, *in the dark*, and, as he alleged, in *search of a book*, which book the Spirit had told him, in a dream, that he was *to get up and go in search of!* Now this *I know*

to be true. This was the defence of this Spiritual Gentlemen ; and upon this defence the Committee acquitted him ; and I must say that the people of the village very generally acquiesced in the justice of the decision ! They were not inclined to visit with too severe a censure a young man so forcibly operated upon by the Spirit. For décomr's sake, however, he very soon exchanged his flock for another at a distance, over which he watched, I dare say, with as much zeal and tenderness as he had watched over his flock at Botley. But Dr. COLLYER's is *another affair*. Here we have a Methodist Apostle of twenty years' standing ; and, besides, the *nature of the charge* is as opposite as black and white. The only resemblance in the two affairs is in the mode of trial ; and I say again, that I object to a belief in any thing that a " *Committee of the Church*" shall say. I must have something a great deal better than that. The DOCTOR has thought proper *to publish*, and I shall think proper to comment upon his publication, unless he, in the mean while, send forth something much more explicit and satisfactory. If the accounts relative to the crowds at the Doctor's shop be true, the " *brethren*" would seem resolved to *brazen the thing out*.

The Letter to WILBERFORCE, which, in justice to the cotton-spinners, it was necessary to publish without delay, has, *for this week*, shut out my rubbing off the score with the infamous and stupid London press. I will do it next week ; and, in the meanwhile, I congratulate this corrupt concern on the prospect that there is of *grown corn* and *bad bread*, which, of course, must tend greatly to the "*relief of agriculture*" and to the "*prosperity*" of the country. If the traders in paragraphs should see the corn fall *a third in price*, what lie, what shuffle, what base trick will they resort to ? Surely, of all the things in this world, this press is the most lying and most impudent thing. At the very moment, when it announces to us, that Sir ROBERT WILSON is gone off to *Gibraltar*, it talks about the *triumph of the Spaniards* ! It will keep on talking thus, even after the French shall have taken possession of the last fortress and the last ship ; and, it will keep talking about the power and glory of England and of her matchless Great Captain long after we shall have been stripped of Guernsey

and Jersey. Verily it is the most infamous thing that the world has ever seen. Conducted by a set of *hirelings*, whose names are unknown; owned by a set of *traders* and *gamblers*, whose names are also unknown: thus owned and thus conducted, it lies away without any check, other than that which is imposed by its own interests, and these generally square with the lying. It is this infamous press, more than any other one cause, that has ruined and enslaved us; that has kept tithes and game-laws tied round our necks, while the people of France have been freed from them. But, only think of the cool impudence of the vagabonds of this press, who, while a part, at least, of the Irish are shut up in their houses from sunset to sunrise, and are liable to be transported without trial by jury, talk, *as of a matter of course*, of *our liberty*, and of *French slavery!* These vagabonds pretend, too, to be on the side of *freedom!* Only think of these vagabonds boasting of *English freedom*, while *SIX-ACTS* are in force! Only think of these vagabonds boasting of *our happiness*, when millions of us are fed worse than the pigs in America; and when it is notorious, that, not long ago, thousands actually died of starvation,

at a time when the Ministers said there was an over-production of food! Without the assistance of these vagabonds, who conduct "*a free press*" under *Six-Acts*, the pretty gentlemen never could have brought things to the present pass. This is the instrument wherewith to make a people *really* slaves. The vagabonds, though bound down at every joint, call their press "*free!*" Yes: it is free to *call itself free*: it is free to boast of *English freedom and happiness*: it is free to tell us lies *to make us pay taxes with less complaining*: it is free to talk of kings, princes, nobles, judges, bishops, justices, and every thing in power, in language so adulatory, so fulsome, so nauseous, so slavish, so dog-like base, that, upon the bare perusal of it, one longs to cover the wretches with spittle or with mud. The Bourbons do not know *how to manage a press*. Have the base thing to *serve you*, have it *your slave*, while it *boasts of its freedom*, and affects, on suitable occasions, to *censure you*. This is the thing; a corrupt, a mercenary, a hypocritical thing like ours, this is the thing wherewith to get all the earnings of a people into your hands. The Bourbon-Censorship is a poor affair, compared with

this. Here you have a press, which coolly boasts of its *freedom* under *Six-Acts!* Never did there exist so complete an engine of public robbery.

MR. COKE AND MRS. HUMPHREY.

THE Publisher of the Register having been several times asked for a Pamphlet, entitled, "A Letter to T. W. Coke, Esq., showing the distress and misery that have been brought upon James Humphrey, Mary his wife, and five children, by the unjust treatment they have experienced from Thos. William Coke, Esq. and Lady Anne Coke;" he, upon inquiry discovered, that the pamphlet had been advertised in Norfolk, as to be sold by him at the Office of the Register. He thinks it necessary to say, that the advertisement was published without his knowledge, and that he does not sell the pamphlet, though he, being a bachelor, by no means takes upon him to decide upon the merits of a case involving questions relative to the value of ladies' dresses and loss of time, and to the compensation due to the wounded feelings of those who deal in breasts of milk! It is ludicrous

enough, to be sure, to see the *Bailiff*, Mr. BLAIKIE, employed in corresponding with a *wet-nurse* and threatening to have her punished! The *Bailiff* charges Mrs. HUMPHREY with *slander*. Does he think, that she has not a great way yet to go, before she come up to the slanderers of Mr. Cobbett in the *Barn* and *Hole-and-Corner Meetings*?

MARKETS.

Average Prices of CORN throughout ENGLAND, for the week ending 16th August.

Per Quarter.

	s.	d.
Wheat.....	58	10
Rye.....	34	5
Barley.....	34	2
Oats.....	24	7
Beans.....	35	8
Pease.....	36	5

Aggregate Average of the six weeks preceding Aug. 15, by which importation is regulated.

Wheat.....	59	9
Rye.....	36	8
Barley.....	32	9
Oats.....	24	6
Beans.....	33	5
Pease.....	36	1

Corn Exchange, Mark Lane.

Quarters of English Grain, &c. arrived Coastwise, from August 18 to August 23, inclusive.

Wheat.. 7,580	Pease	954
Barley.... 290	Tares.....	25
Malt..... 1,050	Linseed....	—
Oats.... 2,446	Rape.....	840
Rye..... 33	Brank.....	—
Beans... 1,379	Mustard....	—

Various Seeds 251 qrs.—Flour 6,603 sacks.

From Ireland.—Oats 720 qrs.

Foreign—Linseed 9,035 qrs.

Friday, August 22.—The arrivals of this week are only moderate, and of Oats very trivial. In consequence of the unsettled state of the weather, more money is asked for Wheat, and for fine dry qualities the prices rather exceed Monday's quotations. Barley continues very scarce, and sells freely at the prices of Monday. Beans unaltered. The quantity of is at market having considerably diminished of late, this article ains rather higher prices.

Monday, August 25.—There was good arrival of Wheat, Flour, Beans, last week, but very little supply of any other article. This morning the quantity of Wheat, Barley, and Beans, from Essex, Kent, and Suffolk, are tolerably good, with several samples of New Wheat and Pease, the chief part of which is in a damp state.

Although the weather, since this sc'nnight, has been partially favourable for the harvest, yet such is the dull state of the Flour trade, that our Millers are divested of any spirit to make purchases; which, therefore, as were compelled, from necessity, to buy dry samples of Old Wheat, reluctantly complied with an advance of 3s. to 4s. per quarter on the terms of last Monday, but there is very little freedom in the trade.

Barley continues scarce, and sells on much the same terms as this day sc'nnight. Boiling Peas are plentiful and 2s. per quarter cheaper. Beans are abundant, and sell heavily at last week's prices. Grey Peas are rather lower. The bonded Oats remain under King's lock, and the prices of Oats are further advanced 1s. to 2s. per quarter, but there have been very few sales made to-day.

SMITHFIELD, Monday, Aug. 25.

Per Stone of 8 pounds (alive).

	s.	d.	s.	d.
Beef.....	3	4	to	3 10
Mutton.....	3	4	—	3 10
Veal.....	3	8	—	4 6
Pork.....	3	8	—	4 8
Lamb.....	4	4	—	4 8

Beasts 2,447 | Sheep ... 23,630
Calves.... 320 | Pigs..... 250

NEWGATE (same day).

Per Stone of 8 pounds (dead).

	s.	d.	s.	d.
Beef.....	2	4	to	3 0
Mutton.....	2	4	—	3 4
Veal.....	3	4	—	4 4
Pork.....	2	8	—	4 8
Lamb.....	3	4	—	4 4

LEADENHALL (same day).

Per Stone of 8 pounds (dead).

	s.	d.	s.	d.
Beef.....	2	0	to	3 8
Mutton.....	2	8	—	3 4
Veal.....	3	4	—	4 8
Pork.....	2	10	—	4 10
Lamb.....	3	4	—	4 4

City, 27 August, 1823.

BACON.

The demand for this article is nearly at an end; and, as there will soon be a good deal of *new* in the market, the present stock will stand over for winter use, when the sharpness of the weather prepares the stomachs of the poor for that which before they had rejected.—The manufacturers in Ireland are making prodigious profits, and are, of course, very anxious to procure orders. On board, for immediate shipments, 50s. to 52s. Landed, 50s. to 54s.

BUTTER.

The Butter market is rather dull; and is likely to be so, as long as the supplies of *foreign* continue so abundant. Prices are a little lower than last week.—On board, Carlow, 80s. to 81s.—Waterford, 75s. to 76s.—Cork or Limerick, 74s.—

Landed: Carlow, 80s. to 81s.—Waterford, 76s. to 77s.—Cork or Limerick, 75s.—Dutch, 74s. to 80s.

CHEESE.

The high price, or something else, seems to have put a stop to the Cheese trade for the present. Prices are entirely *nominal*.

POTATOES.

SPITALFIELDS.—per Ton.

Ware	2 0	to	3 0
Middlings.....	1 5	—	1 10
Chats.....	1 10	—	0 0
Common Red..	0 0	—	0 0
Onions..	0s. 0d.	—	0s. 0d. per bush.

BOROUGH.—per Cwt.

Ware.....	2 3	to	3 3
Middlings.....	1 6	—	2 0
Chats.....	1 6	—	0 0
Common Red..	0 0	—	0 0
Onions..	0s. 0d.	—	0s. 0d. per bush.

HAY and STRAW, per Load.

Smithfield.—Hay....80s. to 110s.

Straw...40s. to 46s.
Clover 100s. to 120s.

St. James's.—Hay....70s. to 115s.
Straw...30s. to 45s.

Clover..97s. to 120s.

Whitechapel.—Hay....70s. to 110s.
Straw...36s. to 44s.
Clover..80s. to 130s.

Price of HOPS, per Cwt. in the BOROUGH.

Pockets.

Kent..	140s.	to	175s.	to	210s.
Sussex	140s.	to	155s.	to	168s.
Essex..	140s.	to	160s.	to	180s.
Farnham, fine £10	to	£13.			
Seconds £7	to	£9 9			

Bags.

Kent..	126s.	to	160s.	to	180s.
Sussex	120s.	to	135s.	to	145s.
Essex..	126s.	to	147s.	to	170s.

Maidstone, Aug. 21.—Our accounts continue bad, and the crop is by many even at £25,000 considered very much over-bid.—Whole parishes will hardly grow a pocket, whilst some few bounds that are situated rather high, are getting forward in Hop, and will grow from seyen to ten ew. per acre, being in an improving state. The picking will be much later than usual, and not expected to begin before the 14th of September.

Worcester, Aug. 16.—The idea of even a small crop of Hops from this plantation is now totally given up. New Hops, from 7l. to 8l. 8s. Old Hops vary very much in price according to their age and quality; those of 1821, if fine, are fetching from 4l. 4s. to 4l. 15s.